

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 23 to recite as follows:

A2
After oxidation, germanium oxide layer 27 can be removed or stripped from substrate 10 by rinsing substrate 10 or the semiconductor wafer that includes substrate 10 with water. After germanium oxide layer 27 is stripped from the top of dielectric stack 15 over substrate 10, dielectric stack 15 serves as dielectric hard mask 35 (shown in FIG. 6) for subsequently etching semiconductor substrate 10, as shown in Figure 7. To form semiconductor devices 37 (shown in Figure 8) such as, for example, field effect transistors, bipolar transistors, etc., on semiconductor substrate 10, other processing steps are performed after etching semiconductor substrate 10 through dielectric hard mask 35. These steps include, but are not limited to, forming doped regions in semiconductor substrate 10 through implantation and/or diffusion; forming dielectric structures over semiconductor substrate 10 through oxidation, deposition, and etching; and forming conductive structures over semiconductor substrate 10. These and other process steps for forming semiconductor devices on substrate 10 are known to those skilled in the art.

On page 5, line 16, delete "etched" and add -patterned by etching- after "is";

On page 6, line 27, add -, as shown in Figure 7- after "substrate 10"; and

On page 6, line 28, delete "(not shown)" and add -37 (shown in Figure 8)-.

In the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 9 and 15 to recite as follows:

Sub B1
Claim 1. (Amended) A method for etching a semiconductor substrate using a germanium hard mask, the semiconductor substrate having a dielectric layer over a major surface thereof, the method comprising the steps of:

A3
depositing a layer of metallic germanium over the dielectric layer;
patterning the layer of metallic germanium to form the germanium hard mask;
selectively etching the dielectric layer through the germanium hard a mask to form